

a people's artists publication

SING OUT!

Vol. 1 No. 3 July, 1950 25¢





THE WRONG SONG

A strange thing happened to Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra in Richmond, Atlanta and New Orleans during a recent national tour. Each time "Dixie" was played, there was an outburst of applause and cheers so deafening you could hardly hear the orchestra. But from the upper reaches of the balcony set aside for the Negro listeners, there came no response.

It isn't really so strange however, that the Negroes in the audience (limited by Jim-Crow restrictions in the concert halls) resent the playing of a song that lauds the "land of cotton" and slavocracy, segregation, lynch terror, poll tax and the Klan. It is hardly a "matter of taste" as Howard Taubman, reporting the incident in the music section of the New York Times calls it. Rather, this "sit down" is a sign of the increased militancy of the Negro people.

Before the war, Toscanini refused to perform "Giovanezza," theme-song of Mussolini's fascism, in a concert in Italy. He was subsequently attacked and beaten by stormtroopers and left Italy declaring that he wouldn't return until Mussolini was overthrown. ("Giovanezza," incidentally, has been prohibited in Italy since Il Duce's execution, but it is possible in any cafe, night club or restaurant to request the orchestra to play "Viale dei Fiori," a mediocre waltz which, except for its three-quarter time, has precisely the same mel-

ody as the fascist anthem. When Hitler occupied Austria, Toscanini withdrew from the Salzburg Festival, a musical event marked by his performances there.

This wire was sent to the Fox Theater in St. Louis the day of Toscanini's concert there: "I sincerely regret I am denied the pleasure of enjoying the NBC Symphony Orchestra at the Fox Theater. I am a Negro and solely because of this fact I am denied admittance to this theater. It is my sincere desire that Mr. Toscanini's next concert in St. Louis will be given in a place where all people regardless of race may have the pleasure of listening."

As Mr. Toscanini reacted against the European fascists, it may be hoped that he will recognize native fascism as well. By refusing to play for restricted audiences both he and the NBC Symphony can help crush Jim-Crow.

JANE BRESLAW

SING OUT!

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16 160

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1950.

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EDITOR Robert Wolfe
MANAGING EDITOR Jane Breslaw

MUSIC STAFF: James Hutchinson, Herbert Haufrecht, Pete Seeger, Ray Smith, Sophie Salpeter, Helaine Mooney

LITERARY STAFF: Beatrice Baron, Betty Sanders, Marilyn West, Ernie Lieberman, Irwin Silber

ART STAFF: Charles Keller, Harold Bloom

MAKE-UP STAFF: Harold Bernz, Freeda Harrison

CIRCULATION: Joan Wolfson

CONTRIBUTORS: Paul Robeson, Howard Fast, Walter Lowenfels, Alan Lomax, Aaron Kramer, Earl Robinson, Waldemar Hille, Sidney Finklestein

15 PUT MY NAME DOWN

Words by Irwin Silber
Based on a song by Woody Guthrie

This is an original Woody Guthrie song that has a habit of cropping up, with new words, whenever and wherever the needs of the people call for it. Today the issue is peace. On sound trucks, street meetings, union halls and wherever people are, this song should be sung. Have you put your name down?

G

I had a broth-er in the in-fan-try, I thought you know'd.

D7

I had a broth-er in the in-fan-try, Way down the road.

G C

He's got a home and wife and ba-by, He don't like war And he

D7 G

don't mean may-be And he's gon-na put his name down.

G REFRAIN

Put my name down, broth-er, Where do I sign? I'm gon-na join the

D7 G

fight for peace Right down the line. Ash-es to ash-es and

C

dust to dust, If you don't sign up the world goes bust, So

D7 G

I'm gon-na put my name down.

I've got a sister in Portland, Maine,
I thought you know'd.
I've got a sister in Portland, Maine,
Way down the road.
She lost a son at Anzio,
And now she wants the world to know,
That she's gonna put her name down.

I've got a brother in Birmingham,
I thought you know'd.
I've got a brother in Birmingham,
Way down the road.
He don't want an ocean trip,
In a Jim Crow Navy, on a Jim Crow
ship,
And he's gonna put his name down.

I've got a brother in Stalingrad,
I thought you know'd.
I've got a brother in Stalingrad,
Way down the road.
On lots of things we don't agree,
But he wants peace, just like me,
So, he's gonna put his name down.

I've got brothers throughout this land,
I thought you know'd.
I've got brothers throughout this land,
Way down the road.
From the Golden Gate to Baltimore,
We all say we don't want war,
And I'm gonna put my name down.

16 SIXTY PER CENT

Words and music
by Les Rice

This song was written for the Farmers Union, during the struggle around the issue of "parity". Les Rice, who also wrote "Banks of Marble" (Vol. I No. 1), is President of the Ulster County (NY) Farmers Union.

I'm six-ty per - cent an A - mer-i - can, I'm
six-ty per - cent a man. That's what, par-i - ty says I am,
that's the law of the land. Now, do I work six - ty per -
cent of the day? Eat six-ty per - cent of my meals? And
does my truck take me in - to town on six-ty per-cent of its wheels.

2.

Which sixty percent of my clothes
should I wear?
Which sixty percent should I choose?
Should I go around with no pants on
Or do I look best without shoes?

Will the dealer take sixty percent
of the bill
For all of my farm supplies?
And will they cut my taxes down
To sixty percent of their size?

3. Now will my chicks be content
to eat
Just 60% of their mash
And will the middleman give my
throat
Just sixty percent of a slash?
Oh, "sixty percent is enough for
him"
My congressman rants and raves
And when I die, they'll bury me
In sixty percent of a grave.

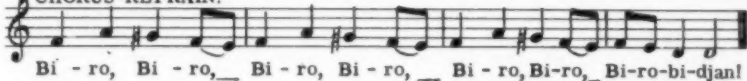
4. Now, all you workers in city and
town,
I know your budget's a mess;
But when you get down to that last
lousy buck,
Remember I've forty cents less!
Now, do I work sixty percent of
the day?
Eat sixty percent of my meals?
And does my truck take me into
town
On sixty percent of its wheels.

Russian-Jewish Folksong
As sung by Betty Sanders

With joy and vigor



CHORUS-REFRAIN:



- 2 Aa'chai! Aa'chai!
Eigene milch und eigene koren
Fieft der yid vie nai geboren
Biro
- 3 Aa'chai! Aa'chai!
Bleeyen vegen vachsen gassen
Oisgevortzelt hass fon rassen
Biro
- 4 Aa'chai! Aa'chai!
M'nachem Mendels tantzen chvatzke
Mit kossaken a kozatzke
Biro
- 5 (Repeat first verse)

Birobidjan is the Autonomous Jewish region in the U. S. S. R. This region was created to serve as a Jewish state for the Jewish people who chose to go there. At present its population has not as yet grown large enough to make it a full Republic. The song expresses the new life of the Jewish people under socialism.

In case you are in doubt about it, the signature for the music (without the usual B-flat in D-minor) is correct. For the best performance, start the song at a moderate pace and increase the excitement and rhythmic tempo. Betty Sanders usually gets audience participation in the refrain section (which is very good to repeat once or twice).

Betty's prose translation is as follows: "The Soviets have given the Jew land to live on, and a new life. -- We now have our own cows and we raise our own crops. We feel a new dignity, now that race hatred has been thrown out."

SINGING PEOPLE

Carl Sandburg, at the Village Vanguard to hear "The Weavers" was confronted by a publicity agent seeking to get a "scoop."

"Tell me, Mr. Sandburg, are you engaged in any literary ventures at the moment?"

"Ventures?" Sandburg seemed amused.

"Yes," said the publicity agent, with pencil poised, "What ventures are you having?"

"Well, I'm writing a trilogy. The first one is a biography of a dead man. It's called The Obituary of an Habitué. The second volume is about his son, and that one is entitled, The Obituary of the Son of an Habitué. And the last volume is about the third generation. That one was a biologist and so the book is called Fun with Fungus."

After all this, the agent figured out that Sandburg was pulling his leg, so he tore up his notes, disappointed. And that is how SING OUT scooped the poop.

A well known popular song writer was asked by a lyricist to write music to his chauvinistic, anti-Chinese words. Our friend said he wouldn't do it. When asked why, he put it as simply as he could by saying that he had Chinese friends who would be insulted by such a song. The disappointed lyricist tried again. "How many Chinese friends can you have?" Without batting an eye, the writer answered, "450 million."

Vern Partlow, the singing newspaperman of Los Angeles, did a rewrite job on his "Talking Atomic Blues," published in the Peoples Songs Bulletin, and the result is topnotch, the best new record on the subject of the atom bomb vs. peace. The new title is "Old Man Atom." Watch August issue for where to buy it.

LIBRARY OF PEOPLE'S MUSIC

by PETE SEEGER

Looking for a Min-
er's Union song of
the 1880's? An abolitionist song of the
1840's? A marching song from New
China? A compilation of peace songs
of all years?

The place to look is the Peoples
Music Library which has set up shop
in the Peoples Artists studio. While
the Library doesn't pretend to contain
anything approaching the massive col-
lection of published folk music to be

found in the Library of Congress or the
New York Public Library, it happens
to be the only place in the United States
where you can find a copy of every
single important American Union song
ever written. Much of the material is
in the form of manuscript copies and
mimeographed song sheets, unobtain-
able elsewhere. Other categories in-
clude Wobbly songs, early Socialist
songs, Negro songs of protest and sev-
eral hundred from the new Eastern
European Democracies.

Started before the war by the
Almanac Singers, the Library was lat-
er enriched by the contributions of
folksingers and folklorists such as
Woodie Guthrie and Alan Lomax. Thou-
sands of items were gathered through
exchange correspondence with pro-
gressive musicians in several dozen
foreign countries.

(Cont'd on back page)

18 DEATH HOUSE BLUES

New words by Jane Breslaw
Music by James Hutchinson

A new song inspired and written after the pattern of "Death House Blues", by Peter Martin and Earl Robinson. Earl's song was about the Scottsboro case.

Wil - lie Mc - Gee is bound to die,
Jim Crow Ju - ry is the rea - son why,
Frame-up ver - dict is what they use, Got him sing-ing the
Chorus:
Death House Blues. White work - ing men gon - na
set him free, Black work-ing men gon-na set him free. All
work - ing men gon-na set him free,
Work - ing men and the C. R. C. I

2.

Willie McGee is an innocent man,
But he's been framed by the Ku Klux Klan.
If we let him die, then all of us lose,
We'll all be singing those Death House
Blues. (Chorus:)

3. Willie McGee is the father of four,
And he wants to see those kids some more,
Family was sad when they heard the news,
Got them all singing those Death House
Blues. (Chorus:)

4. Willie McGee is in the Death House Cell
Waiting to hear that Liberty Bell.
We've got to free him, we can't refuse,
We don't want no more Death House Blues.
(Chorus:)



PEOPLE'S

SONGS OF LABOR AND THE

When the musicologists of the future begin to make their analyses of the music of our time, they will spend a not inconsiderable amount of time and work on a modest little publication known as the "People's Songs Bulletin."

From the Winter of 1946 through the Spring of 1949, this 12-page monthly bulletin of songs of the people left an indelible mark on the culture of America. Containing 319 songs, countless research articles, technical information, etc., the Bulletin presents a picture of a musical America which is noticeably missing from the files of the leading commercial publishers and concert agencies.

From Song No. 1, "Solidarity Forever", to Song No. 319, "Johnny I Hardly Knew You", the thirty some odd issues of the People's Songs Bulletin distributed songs reflecting the main struggles of the American people and the many cultures which are a part of our culture to thousands of singers, song-writers, composers, and performers throughout the country.

Some of the songs which first saw the light of day in the pages of the People's Songs Bulletin were: Hallelujah, I'm Travellin; Song of My Hands; Wasn't That A Time; Put it on the Ground; Unemployment Compensation Blues; The Same Merry Go-Round; and many, many others.

True, many of these topical songs could be called "woeful ditties", written for the moment, lasting a few short weeks -- and playing a small but important role in the day-to-day struggles of the people.

But these were the songs that were needed -- the strike ballads, the election jingles, the high price blues -- and after appearing in the Bulletin they shortly were heard from sound-trucks, at union meetings, on picket-lines in every city in the country.

The People's Songs Bulletin did contain more than brand new songs. A very important, and unprecedented, job was done in reviving many folk songs and older labor songs which could be utilized by performers for special programs and applied most directly to the important issues.

Among these were such songs as: The Farmer is the Man; No Irish Need Apply; Casey Jones; Joe Hill; Talking Union; Beloved Comrade; and countless others.

Songs from Negro culture played an important part in the make-up of the People's Songs Bulletin. Some of the older spirituals, songs of the Underground Railroad, Negro work songs, and current songs concerned with the fight for Negro rights were always in the pages of the Bulletin. Here in one collection are Follow the Drinking Gourd; Oh Freedom; Jim Crow; Black, Brown, and White Blues; Irene; John Henry; Listen Mister Bilbo; to name just a few.

Songs from some twenty different nations and nationalities also found their way into the pages of the Bulletin. Songs of Free China, Italy, France, the Soviet Union, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and many others were picked up by singers from Portland to Miami and sung for audiences whose previous musical experience had been principally along lines of Anglo-Saxon culture.

There are many other categories which could be cited and explored -- but one more will be sufficient. Recognizing that many teachers and group workers were learning the value of these songs, the Bulletin was concerned with the idea of

PEOPLE'S SONGS

FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

- by IRWIN SILBER
Former Exec. Sec'y, People's Songs



"Songs to Grow On", And so, songs like Brown Skinned Cow, Don't You Push Me, Go Tell Aunt Nancy, When I Was A Little Boy, were given their place in the People's Songs Bulletin.

The People's Songs Bulletin was more than a series of song folios, however. Just looking over the list of articles which appeared in the Bulletin is enough to make one feel that they should be put together in one collection and made required reading for all singers, composers, and song-writers today.

Research articles, short biographies, and technical articles appeared in practically every issue of the Bulletin. Among the research articles were Elie Siegmeister's "Folk Song and Symphony", "Early Labor Songs" by Phil Foner, "The Story of Emma Dusenberry" by Waldemar Hille, and many others.

Articles on "How to Lead Mass Singing", Film strips, Use of Folk Music in the Schools, Microphone Technique, and similar technical aids for People's Songsters appeared frequently.

If you ever want some of the background story on Vern Partlow -- the singing organizer, Win Stracke, Dock Reese, Cisco Houston, Richard Dyer-Bennet, and countless others, thumb through some of these back issues.

One word about the columns of Lee Hays. The collected articles of this inimitable song-writer, singer and raconteur (Lee's gonna love that) were probably as big a subscription-booster for the Bulletin as anything else. The story of "Wally Hille and the Sea Serpent" and Lee's learned piece on "The Incidence of the word Roll in American Folk Music" will take their place with some of the best of Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill.

One aspect of the People's Songs Bulletin cannot be measured in terms of citing chapter and verse, or article and song. That is the role played by the Bulletin in stimulating the organizing of singing and music groups throughout the country.

The fact that it served at all times as the arena for the inter-change of ideas and experiences for singers and song-writers from coast to coast, made the Bulletin an organizing weapon.

Within a year after its first issue, People's Songs groups had sprung up in Cleveland, Chicago and Los Angeles, and were shortly followed by others in Detroit, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Portland, Denver, and many more.

The People's Songs Bulletin ceased publication with Vol. 4, No. 1, in March of 1949. But its work will be felt for many years to come. People's Artists is now preparing a complete index, issue by issue, of the songs and main articles in the People's Songs Bulletin. Copies of this index may be purchased for 25¢ from Peoples Artists.

While a number of these Bulletins are out-of-print, there are still copies available for most of the issues. Using this index, people throughout the country can still take advantage of the wonderful work done by People's Songs.

To Pete Seeger, Waldemar Hille, Lee Hays, Betty Sanders, Bernie Asbel, Boots Casetta, Bob Claiborne, and the many others who produced the People's Songs Bulletin, the People's Artists of today and the future owe lasting thanks. The growth of SING OUT and the work of People's Artists generally will be the surest testament to the groundwork laid by People's Songs.

19 PEACE, IT'S WONDERFUL

Words and music by
Jacqueline Steiner

This song was written specifically for a Peace Hoot in Boston. Bess Hawes rushed a copy to NYC in time for it to be used at the recent Peace Rally at Madison Square Garden. The song sounds best with the verses sung solo and refrain sung by chorus (as printed). Do it in Calypso style.

Now here's a sto - ry for all good men, Of
some slick Wash - ing - ton gen - tle - men, They
made a plan to carve up the map, To
eat the meat and leave the scrap. So *** REFRAIN**
Peace is won - der - ful so - they
So Peace is
say!
won - der - ful so they say!

*(Use double lyric pattern on
succeeding verses of song)

There on the White House balcony,
That overlooks Washington D. C.
Old Harry said to his friend Louis,
This is how things appear to me.

Everything would be OK, If the
Rest of the world would get out of the
way.

So Louie make me a few bombs more,
And we will conduct a peaceful war.
(REFRAIN:) (Cont'd on next page)

(Cont'd from previous page)

The Russians wear their hair too long,
Their minds are evil, their vodka strong.
They're boors, they're rascals, they
have no tact,
We'll reform them with the Atlantic pact.

The French are ungrateful so oo la la,
We can drown them with Coco-Cola.
But of course we mustn't go too far,
So we'll spare the troops in Indo-China.
(REFRAIN:)

And then we mustn't forget our pal,
That great European General.
Francisco tells me the air in Spain,
Is great for the American Aeroplane.

We'll buy the Italians, ignore Chinese,
We'll threaten the British and use the
Swedes,
We'll double-cross Israel and gum up
the works,
And say we did it all to protect the
Turks. (REFRAIN:)

Korea's now being over-run
By some foreign Koreans
Let's send our planes without delay
To get Korea for the U. S. A.

But everything would be O. K.
If the rest of the world would get out
of the way.
So Harry I'll make you a few bombs
more,
And we will conduct a peaceful war.

Now that's the story up till today,
So we better get moving right away.
If you want those terrible wars to cease,
Let all good people fight for peace.
(sign up for peace)

(REFRAIN:)



"TZENA, TZENA, TZENA" (Decca
27053) backed by " 'Round the World.' "

"Tzena" is a song that has come to be associated with the struggle for Israeli independence. The Weavers perform it in Hebrew with all the exuberant confidence in the future that the song contains. Expressing international friendship is "Round The World," a group of songs from several countries popularized by the Weavers.

Released at the same time is a version of "Tzena" in English with the Weavers, Gordon Jenkins' orchestra and chorus, backed by "Goodnight Irene" (Decca 27077). Some of the antics of chorus and orchestra in this "commercialized" treatment detract considerably from the spirit of the song. Even so, "Tzena" stands out in competition with current pops. Of other releases since Decca's, the less heard the better.

Almost authentically recorded is the late Huddie Leadbetter's great song, "Irene," with the exception of some poor musical treatment: particularly an introductory violin solo, the honey-dripping quality of which is almost unbearable. Especially enjoyable are the solo take-offs by Lee Hays and Ronnie Gilbert. It is one of the finest songs of the Negro people and had the pronounced waltz tempo been less pronounced and the wailing violins and chorus less wailing, "Irene" would have been excellent.

The recording of such songs of the people as "Tzena," "Irene" and even the familiar "Wanderin'" (RCA-Victor: Sammy Kaye) by the large companies does much to get them the widespread audience to whom they belong. Unfortunately, they are always in danger of losing their strength and veracity through the trite tricks of commercialism.

20 SONG FOR PEACE

Words by Aaron Kramer
Music by Ralph Ditchik

A new setting of Aaron Kramer's words about Peace has found favor at a New York Hootenanny. The earlier setting was called "Peace Cantata" - to music by Waldemar Hille. Ralph Ditchik, who wrote this printed version, is well known in NYC as a choral director, composer, and pianist.

What did we do when we want - ed corn? We
What did we do when we need - ed a town? We
ploughed and we sowed from ear -ly morn,
hammered and we nailed till the sun went down, For our hands were strong, and our
hearts were young, and our dream was a - dream - ing a - ges long.
What shall we do when its peace we want? When its more than a fellow can -
build or plant? We'll gath - er friends from the ends of the earth to
lend a hand in its hour of birth. We'll plough! We'll
sow! We'll ham - mer we'll nail we'll ham - mer all day till
peace is real, For our hands are strong and our hearts are young and our
dream's been a - dream - ing a - ges long.

21 THINGS ABOUT COMIN' MY WAY

'29 Depression Blues
Negro Folk

This is a song of the depression years, which expresses the way many of us feel today. --"After I lost my farm, I lost my job, my house, my gal, my money, my health, my friend -- after all my hard travelling ... things is 'bout coming my way."

Slow Blues rhythm



Ain't got no mon-ey, Can't buy no
grub, Back-bone and na-vel
Doing the bel-ly-rub, Now af-ter
All my hard trav-'ling,
Things a-bout com-in' my way.

The pot was empty,
The cupboard bare
I said, "Mama,
What's going on here?" (REFRAIN)

The rent was due,
The light was out
I said, "Mama,
What's it all about?" (REFRAIN)

Sister was sick,
The doctor couldn't come
'Cause we couldn't pay him
The proper sum. (REFRAIN)

SONG OF PROCLAMATION

of the PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Poem by Kim Woo Chui

Music by Park Han Kyu

Transcribed by James Hutchinson

Somehow it seemed very appropriate to print this song this month.

22

From Paek-Du, high pool'd moun-tain,

To the far-thest tip of Che-Ju, We de-fend our

Great Re-pub-lic, Marching thir-ty mil-lion strong.

Hills, riv-ers, All of the wat-ers Join in our

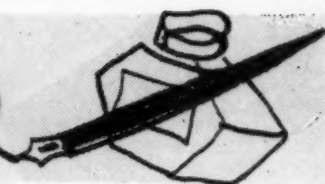
joy to-day. Shine bright be-lov'd Peo-ples' coun-try,

We Ko-re-ans shine to-day. Hur-ray! Hur-ray! Ko-

re-a is free, Peo-ples' Re-pub-lic!

Shine on sun, Shine on stars, Peace to our fa-ther-land.

Correspondence



Dear Editors:

... In Schenectady the workers sang and in Schenectady the workers won. In their fight to hold the UE against the pressures of the old company union, against the sell-out artists and some clergymen who were enlisted by the bosses, they wanted Peoples Artists to fight right in there with them. We got a call and off we went without needing to ask questions. We had visions of shopgate meetings at 6 A. M., and then at 3 for the late shift, for a daily radio show, a weekly television program plus countless evening meetings. Frankly we expected no sleep, practically no funds but much hard work and a most enlightening three weeks.

Well, it didn't quite turn out that way. The only thing the leadership wanted was a musical signature for their daily radio show, with an occasional song if they had too short a script. We were shocked at the same old lack of recognition of the possibilities of integrating song into meetings. It takes more work on our part to show by example the full value that our songs can have in a struggle of this kind. If we are agreed that art is a weapon, we must show how that weapon can be wielded.

In Schenectady, they were reluctant to have shop gate meetings at all--so

we missed the opportunity to sing with vast numbers of workers there. In the T. V. and radio scripts, songs were only tacked on. One of the hardest things to do was to show the U. E. leadership that they were wrong when they said the workers wouldn't sing. Our songs were unfamiliar, they said. But after almost sneaking a few songs into a few small gatherings of from 15 to 50 workers, we were welcomed to their larger membership meetings of up to 800 workers. Yes, they sang. They told us that here were their feelings and their struggles in songs they'd never heard before.

As you know, in Schenectady the UE got the majority over the phoney IUE. The spirit is great and both rank and file and leadership now say that Peoples Artists helped to build that spirit. They want us to come again for their big field day. They're still humming the union songs and they want to hear them again.

Through more work of this kind we can learn how Peoples Artists can soon become an important arm to the American Labor movement.

See you soon,

Betty Sanders
Ernie Lieberman

PEOPLES ARTISTS, INC.
106 East 14th Street
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(12 issues) to SING OUT

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BEST PEACE SONGS

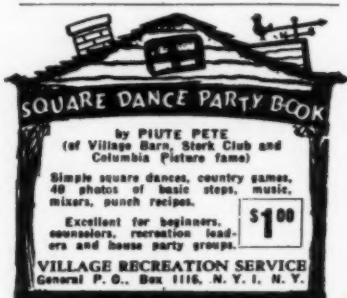
People's Songs published a number of Peace Songs during its existence. These songs are still available by ordering back issues of the Bulletin at 25¢ each.

- Walk In Peace
- Vol. I No. 11, People's Songs
- Atomic Energy
- Vol. I No. 12, People's Songs
- Johnny I Hardly Knew You
- Vol. III No. 4, People's Songs
- Johnny Has Gone For a Soldier
- Vol. II No. 4, People's Songs
- Get On Board That Peace Train
- Vol. I No. 4, People's Songs
- Study War No More
- Negro Spiritual
- That's Why
- Vol. I No. 10, People's Songs
- Peace On Earth Forever
- Vol. III No. 2, People's Songs
- Prague Festival Song
- Vol. II No. 9, People's Songs
- Shalom Chaverim (Hebrew Round)
- Vol. III No. 2, People's Songs
- Talking Atomic Blues
- Vol. I, No. 12, People's Songs
- If I Had A Hammer
- Vol. I No. 1, Sing Out

("Library" cont'd from page 6)

The Library committee, in addition to putting the collection into usable condition, is also making it possible to answer requests by mail from all over the country. There will be a small service charge, depending on how much research has to be done by the librarians. At present, until more librarians are trained, the library is open only on Tuesdays from 5 to 8 P.M.

While service charges will pay the running expenses of the Library, contributions are urgently needed to buy equipment vital to its successful functioning. All contributions should be addressed to the Library of Peoples Music c/o Peoples Artists, 106 E. 14th St., NYC.



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